submitting project-proposals for Child Labour Education and Rehabilitation under the National Child Labour Project;

(b) if so, the number of child labour to be covered and the amount of Central aid sought for the same in the years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and the current year and the aid granted against the demand; and

(c) the reasons for delay in clearance of the proposals and grants-in-aid this year?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A total of 5286 children were proposed to be covered and central aid to the tune of about Rs. 3 crore per annum was sought. Under NCLP Scheme, funds are released only to those districts which are identified by Government of India for the implementation of this Scheme and is also subject to the availability of funds.

Labour Ministers' Conference

973. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a three-day Conference of Labour Ministers was held from October 16 to 18, 2003;

(b) if so, what were the main observations and the decisions made at the Conference; and

(c) whether the State Government of Maharashtra made a number of recommendations for promotion and protection of interests of the unorganised sector of labour including the farm labour, if so, the details thereof and the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) The 39th Session of Indian Labour Conference was held on 16-18 October, 2003.

(b) The major recommendations of the Conference include, Social Security scheme for the workers in the unorganised sector, greater integration in the existing welfare schemes, setting up of a Central Advisory Employment Council at the Centre and State level and formulation of a National Vocational Training policy.

(c) The State Government of Maharashtra sought exemption from Contract Labour (R&A) Act, 1970 in Special Economic Zones, Textiles & IT sectors while providing jobs security to the contract workers.

Conditions of bonded labourers

974. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the conditions of bonded labourers in the country has gone from bad to worse, if so, what steps are planned for, to tackle this problem

(b) where this problem exists out of eighteen States; and

(c) whether eleven States are not following directives of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) if so, what steps are being taken to ensure compliances of the directives of NHRC in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) No, Sir. The Bonded Labour System has been abolished by law through out the country *w.e.f.* 24.10.1975 under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. As per the Act, Vigilance Committees have been constituted both at district and sub-divisional levels by the States/ Union Territories for identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers. The District and Sub-Divisional Magistrates have been entrusted with certain duties and responsibilities under the Act with a view to take punitive action against the offenders for violation of the provisions of the Act

(b) Incidence of Bonded Labour System have been reported from time to time, from 15 States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

(c) The National Human Rights Commission in their report dated 27th March, 2003 submitted to the Hon'ble Supreme Court informed that the response received from some States in relation to furnishing of information for monitoring of identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourer was unsatisfactory and requested that specific directions be issued by the Apex court to these States The Supreme Court in its order dated 15.7.2003 in Writ Petition No. 3922/85 have directed 11 State